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SKENANDOA

By

Clinton Scollard

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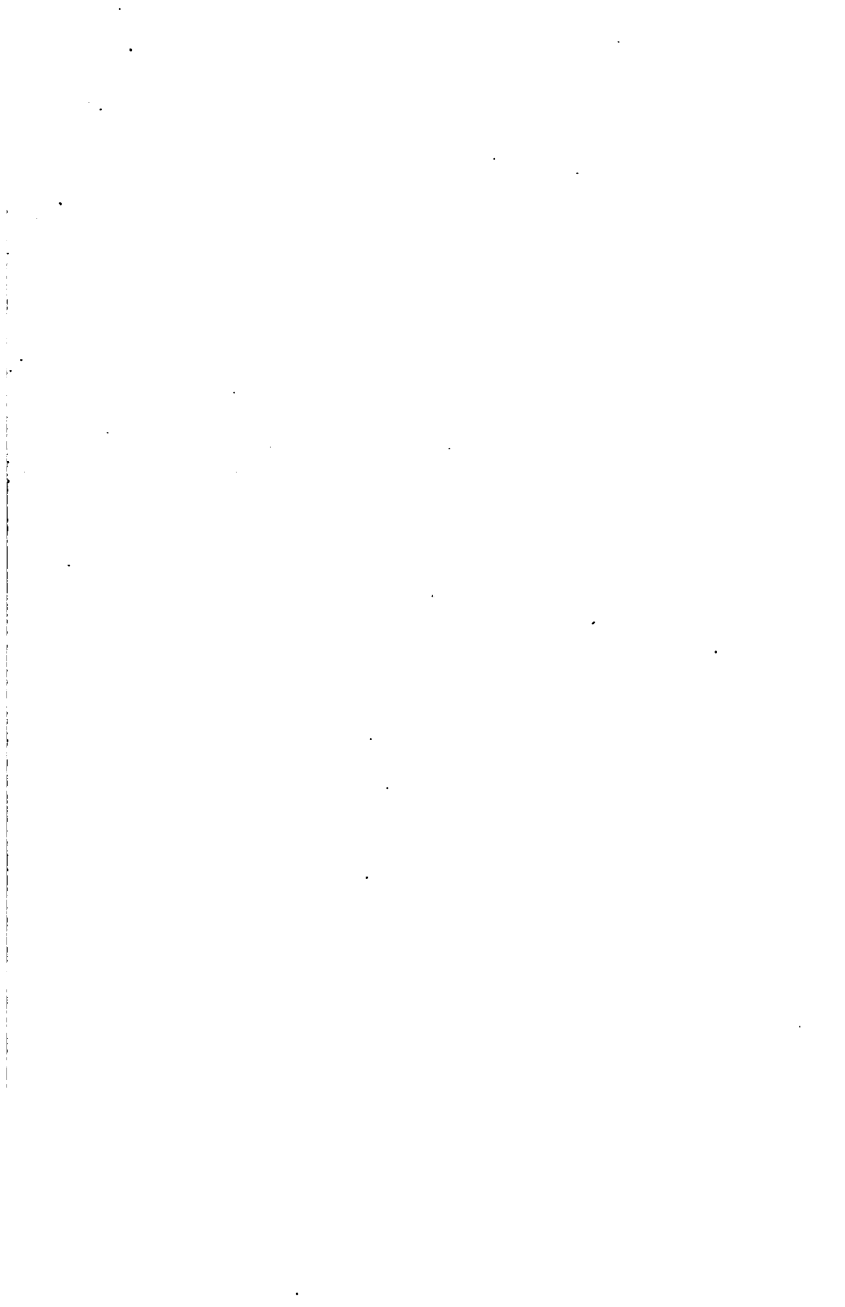
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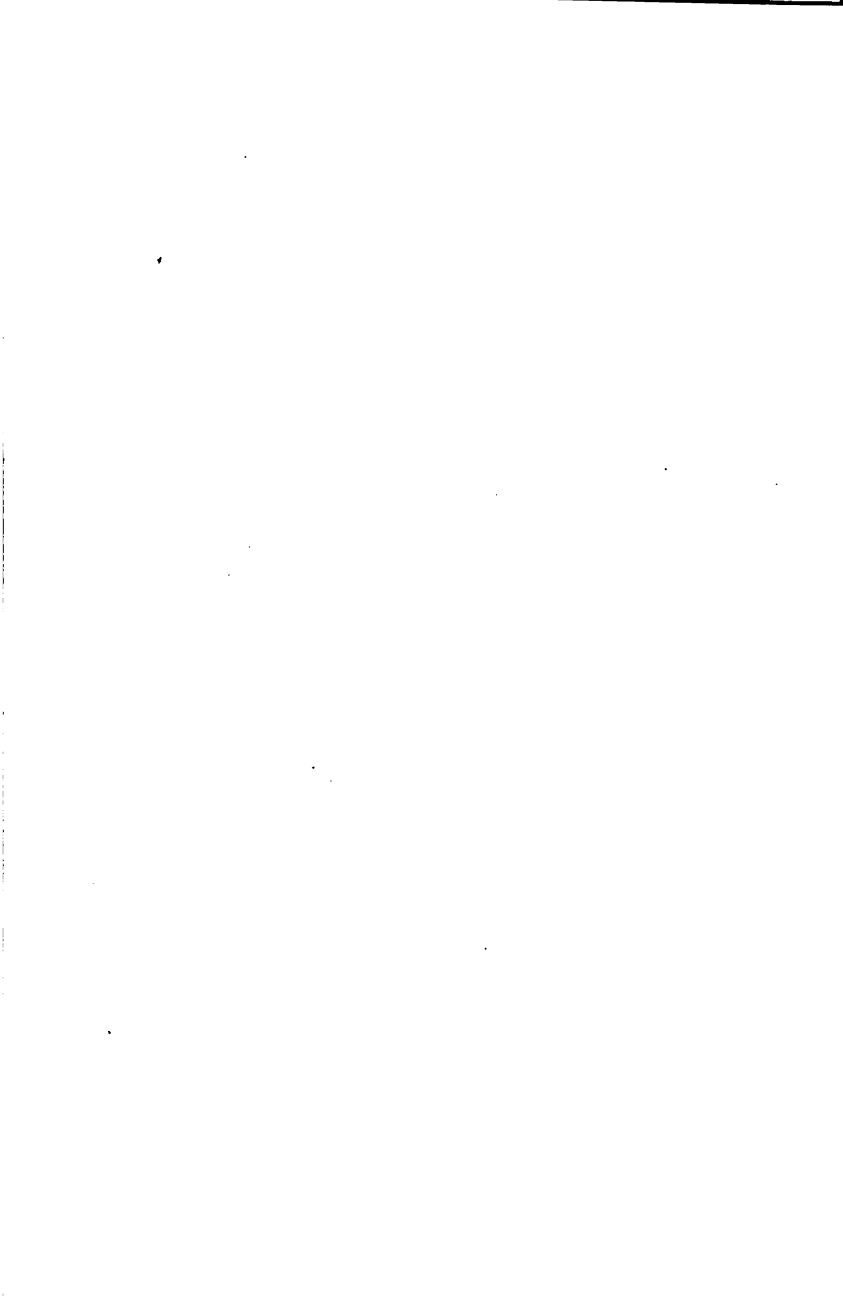
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June - 1916.











SKENANDOA



Books by Mr. Scollard



IN VERSE

**PICTURES IN SONG
WITH REED AND LYRE
OLD AND NEW WORLD LYRICS
GIOVIO AND GIULIA
SONGS OF SUNRISE LANDS
HILLS OF SONG**

IN PROSE

**UNDER SUMMER SKIES
ON SUNNY SHORES**

SKENANDOA

BY

CLINTON SCOLLARD



MDCCCXCVI

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George Nichols fund

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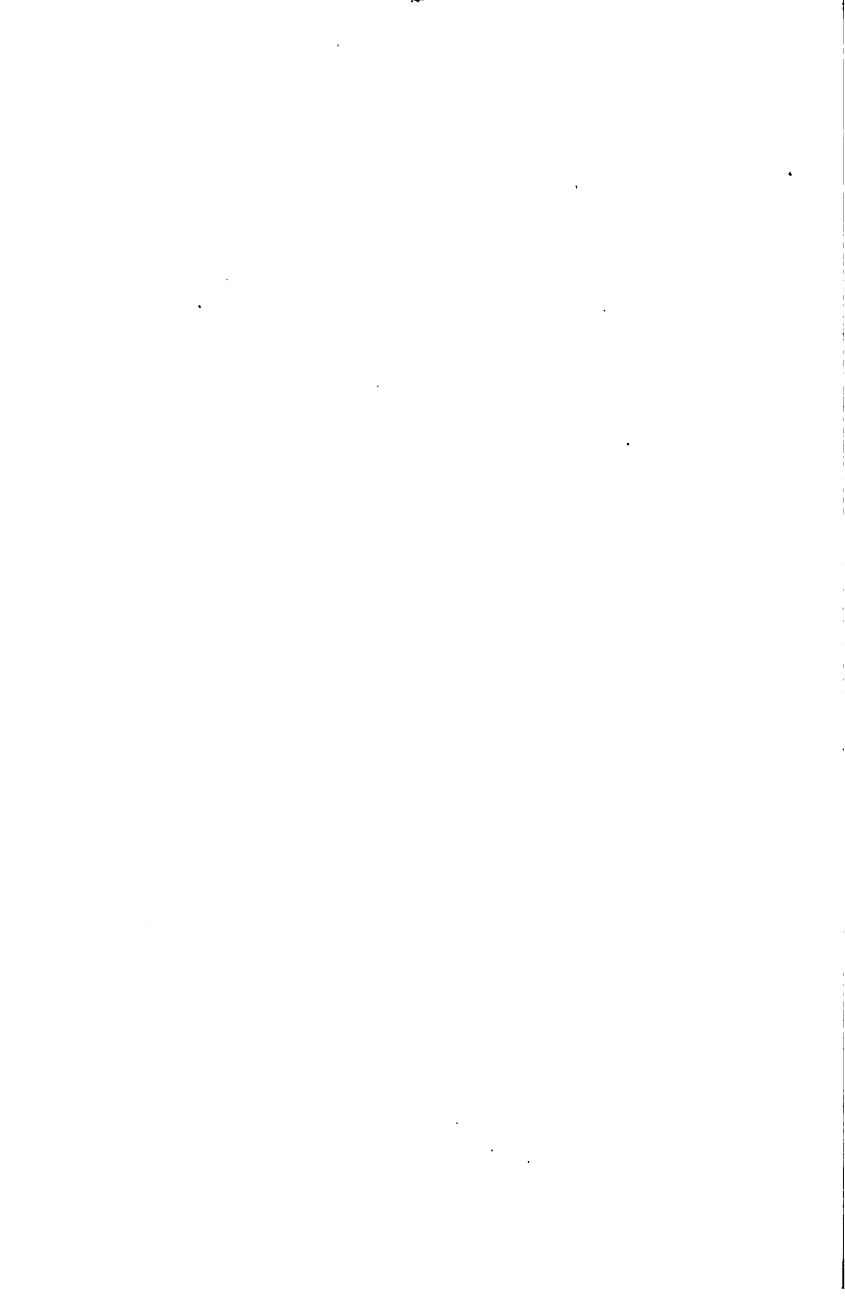
TO

EDWARD NORTH, L.H.D., LL.D.

*Could I but speak
In singing syllables of "golden Greek,"
Then were it fitter far for me to bring
To thee, wide-wandered from thine Attic home
Across the bloomless valleys of the foam,
Some story of Hellenic heroing.*

*Alas! my new-world Muse
Feels not the ichor of Castalian dews;
No Hymettean bee
A happy Hybla hath up-stored for me;
I know no songful meads,
And no Pandean reeds,
Save where the Oriskany leads
Its rhythmic liquid music to the sea.*

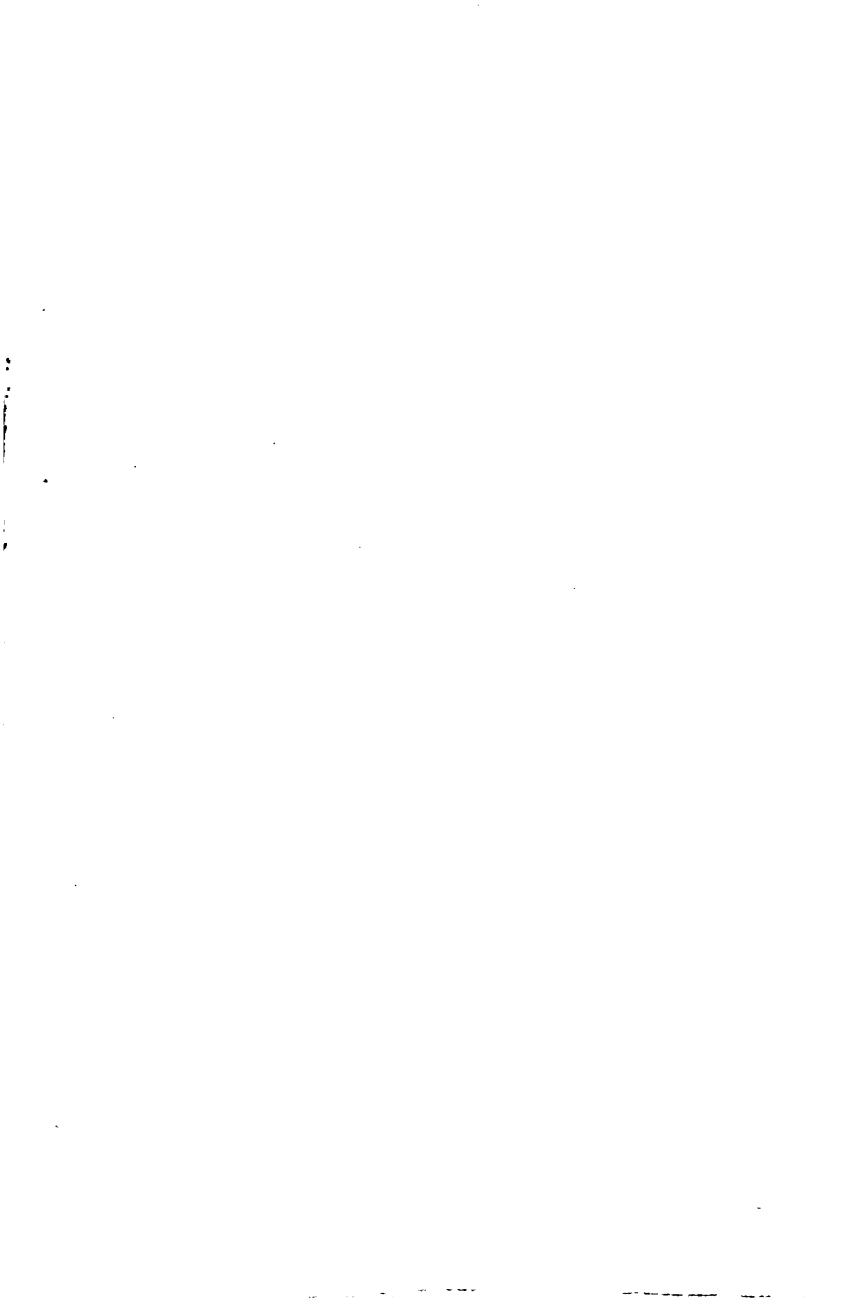
*So must the tale
Be of no classic vale,—
Of no Homeric valiance, save wherein
All deeds of hardihood are kith and kin.
But if some hint inwrought
Within the lines is caught
That minds thee of the fearless hero-age,
Then not in vain I bring this epic page.*



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THE COMPACT



THE COMPACT

SANK the sun of early August
In a veil of vermeil haze,
While the resonant cicada
Rasped amid the tasselled maize.

Tuned the anchorite of song-birds
His ecstatic vespers-strain
From his hermitage leaf-hidden,
Passion-music linked with pain.

And as denser drew the shadows
Round the boles of birch and beech,
The innumerable hosts of twilight
Found their sibyllistic speech.

SKENANDOA

Rippled little leafy laughs
Through the thickets to and fro,
Till the hunter's stars were loosened
And the new moon showed its bow.

Then there sprang a sudden wafture, —
Every bough was lip-caressed
By the wandering wind-spirit
From the lands beyond the west.

Fever fires were swift forgotten,
For he whispered vernal news,
Raising rapturous rain-visions
And the dream of drenching dews.

While the boughs and breeze were busy
With their questions and replies,
And the new moon's bow hung ready
For the Sachem of the Skies,

THE COMPACT

From the corn-encompassed castle,
From the staunch and tall stockade,
Warily there strode two warriors
Toward a willow-girdled glade.

He who foremost trod the pathway
Seemed above the touch of cares,
And the mien that sat upon him
Was the mien a master wears.

Though for seventy long seasons
He had breasted cold and heat,
Still was his the arm of iron,
Still were his the tireless feet.

Down the bare breadth of his bosom
Symbolistic lines there ran,
But in scarless, fearless features
Looked he nature's nobleman.

SKENANDOA

He who followed was a springal
Buoyant in his sinewy grace,
With the young Spring's flush of promise
In the rondure of his face.

On the moonlight's silvery margin,
Where the dingle met the brake,
The seclusion-seeking warriors
Paused, and slow the elder spake :

“ Hearken, son of Singing Arrow !
Bold art thou in thy desire ;
Thou wouldst win thy sachem's daughter, —
Wed the Rose upon the Briar.

“ Wooers hath the maiden many,
Braves of both the Wolf and Bear,
Who have fearless faced the battle,
Crying down the hound, Despair.

THE COMPACT

“ Though thine eyes have looked on danger,
Yet I hold thee half untried,
For thou hast not met the onset,
Stemmed the conflict's stormy tide.

“ Skenandoa's star-eyed daughter
May not mate with him whose breath
Fails, or falters into swerving,
At the stony stare of death.

“ Yet, for love grows out of liking,
And because the Rose's heart
Opens warmly at thy coming,
I will choose the silent part ;

“ Stand not in thy way of wooing, —
Nay ! will bless the gifts that woo,
If thou wilt but prove by doing
Thou hast power to dare and do.”

SKENANDOA

Said the son of Singing Arrow,
 " Lo ! the test is all I ask :
Be thou judge, O mighty chieftain,
 I am ready : set the task ! "

Round the mouth of Skenandoa
 Did a smile's slow ripple run,
And he cried in grave approval,
 " Answered like thy father's son !

" Through the doorway of the Long House,
 Westward marching even now,
Come our brothers of the pale-face,
 Having sworn a solemn vow.

" For within beleaguered Stanwix
 Fear assails the door of Life,
Since, without, Tha-en-da-né-gea
 Menaces with fire and knife.

THE COMPACT

" Where the wigwams of Orisca
Stand amid their groves of pine,
Thou shalt meet the pale-faced warriors
At the crimson morrow-shine.

" Shoulder shalt thou set to shoulder,
Theirs and thine against the foe ;
Nor by counsel-uncompanions
To the struggle shalt thou go !

" Winding war-paths unforgotten
Once again will I resume ;
Once again above my forehead
Set for sign the scarlet plume !

" Once again the fatal ochre
On my cheek shall show its dye ;
Once again the brave Oneidas
Hearken to the Hemlock's cry !

SKENANDOA

"For has not our master, Kirkland,
Man of meekness, blessed the fight,
Saying that the pale-face fathers
Strike for freedom and the right?"

Sank the son of Singing Arrow
In obeisance on his knee,
Seized the hand of Skenandoa,
Greeting him impassionedly :

"Deeds, not words, O hoary Hemlock,
These shall prove me worthy thine ;
But, before the trail be taken,
Seal thy promise with a sign."

"Lo ! I seal it," said the sachem,
"Be it for the worst or best ;
By the rites of my adoption,
Seared in youth across my breast, —

THE COMPACT

" By the white bones of my fathers
Buried where great waters pour,
If thou wilt reveal thy valor
In the battle's fire and roar,

" Then, O son of Singing Arrow,
Thou shalt clasp thy soul's desire,
Have to wife the flower of daughters,
Wed the Rose upon the Briar.

" But the moon's new bow of silver
From the heaven soon will fail,
And before it crest the pine-tree
We must take the narrow trail.

" Here, O son of Singing Arrow,
Ere the bended bow retreat
One full quiver toward its haven
For the quest we twain will meet."

SKENANDOA

Then, as silent as their shadows,
Swift as ghosts before the morn,
Vanished sachem-sire and lover
Down the aisleways of the corn.

THE NIGHT TRAIL





THE NIGHT TRAIL

OUT of the night a cry
That seems to quaver and ring
To the dome of the purple sky
With a ghostly cadencing.

Is it the owlet's scream,
High and haunting and harsh,
Or the bittern in his dream
In the murk of the cedar marsh?

Is it a wraith forlorn
That has wandered back to wail
On the margin of the corn
That the tribes of the red-man fail?

SKENANDOA

But no ! for it wavers now
Into runs like those that rill
From a bevy of birds on a bough
As the morn comes over the hill.

And into the paling tide
Of the moon hung over the pine
Two stealthy forms there glide
Without a word for a sign.

In the heart of one there flows
The pulse-swift passion of youth,
In the other's kindles and glows
The fire of valor and truth.

With never a pause they pass
Where the brook laughs, April-sweet,
And scarce a weft of the grass
Is stirred by their falling feet ;

THE NIGHT TRAIL

Just a shadow across

The dale for an instant drawn,
Then the moon again on the moss,
And the stars till the flower of dawn.

The gray wolf in his lair

Turns in his troubled sleep ;
At his vision growls the bear
From the heart of the dingle deep ;

And the panther, half adrowse

Over the pool's green brink,
Crouches amid the boughs
Till the dun deer come to drink.

Only the moccasin dread

With its hiss of venom heeds,
Raising its evil head
From its bed in the flags and reeds.

SKENANDOA

When under the wood's dark side
Has dipped the bow of the moon,
Still burns above for a guide
The fourfold light of The Loon.

In as many sinuous ways
As dreams at the set of sun,
Through maze upon tangled maze
Does their devious pathway run.

Now winning blows the wind
Of the musky middle night,
And far have they left behind
Their lodge-doors in their flight.

They have come to the Place of the Fox,
Where the nimble water pours
Its music over the rocks
For the joy of the meadow shores.

THE NIGHT TRAIL

They have wet their feet at the ford,
And now they are fain to climb
The hills that are scarred and scored
By the unseen hand of Time ;

Hills where the Winter broods
Till May, in her righteous wrath,
Harries him out of the woods
And away on his polar path.

Now do the wild heights yield,
And now do the forests fail,
And nigh to the fair White Field
They follow the trend of the trail.

And just as the dawn's first band
On the breast of the east out-glows,
The tireless runners stand
Where the River of Nettles flows.

SKENANDOA

Still does the path out-reach,
But now in the face of the morn
Whose lips are pink like the peach,
Whose brow is gold like the corn,

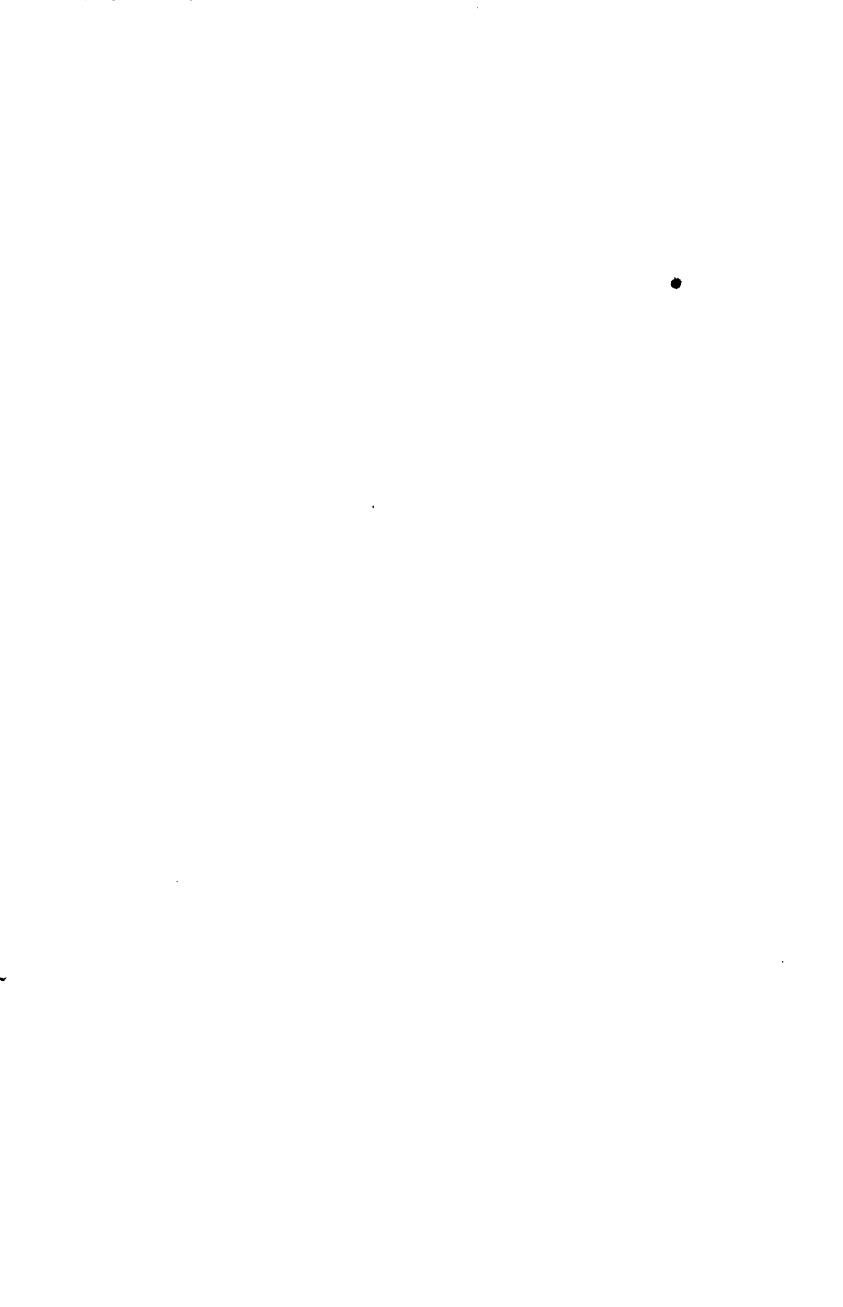
A rapture runs with the race,
A thrill takes hold on the thews ;
There 's a warmth in the wind's embrace,
And a glory-gleam on the dew.

So faster they forward leap
With a buoyant burst, as one
Who breaks from the bonds of sleep
Free-limbed at the call of the sun.

They fly with the broadening light
As swift as the fleetest fawn,
Out of the heart of the night
Into the heart of the dawn.

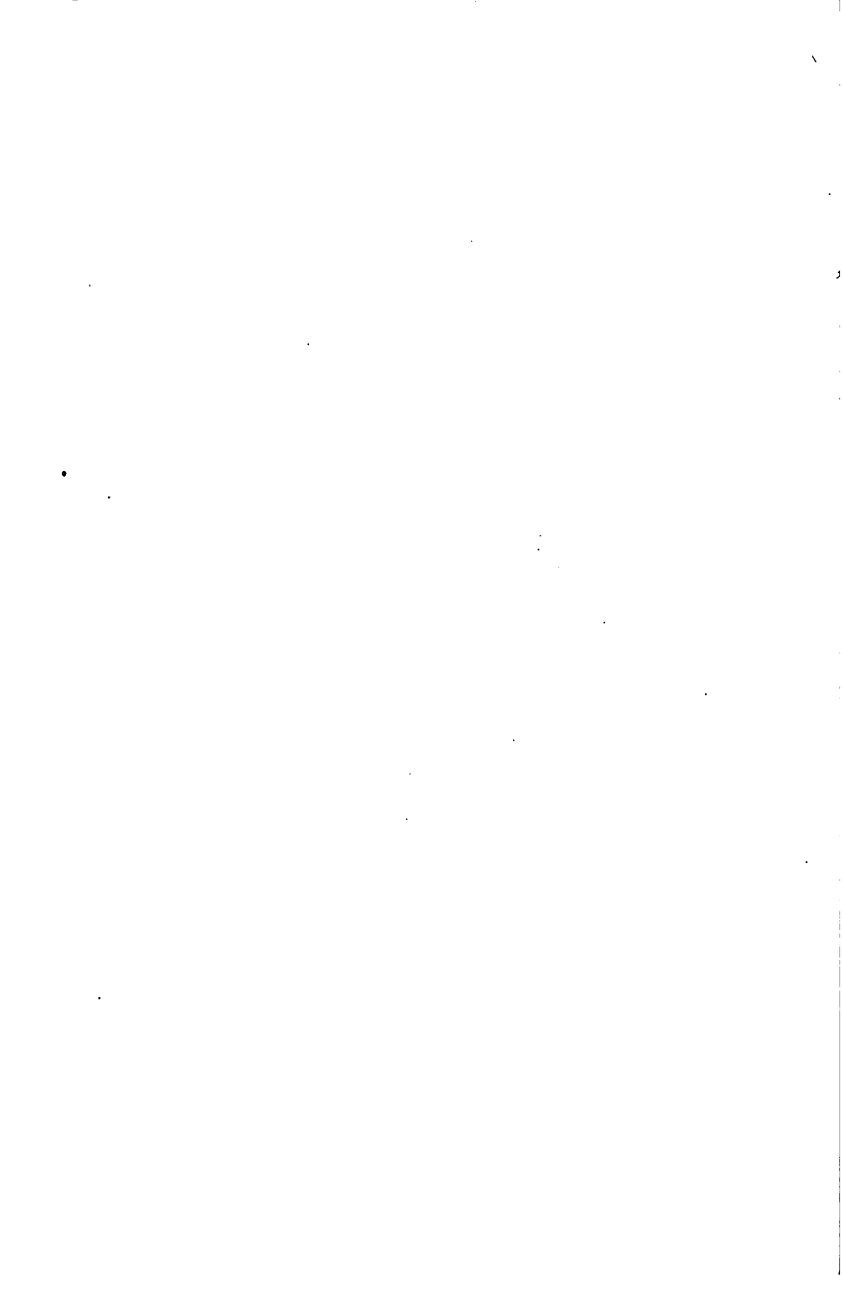
THE NIGHT TRAIL

Until, at the orient hour,
 •They come to the end of the trail,
Where the pines of Orisca tower
 On the verge of the Mohawk vale.



THE TRIAL BY BATTLE





THE TRIAL BY BATTLE

THOUGH the sun was high in the heavens
There was still no stir in the lines
Of the patriot pale-face fathers
By the tall Orisca pines ;

And there grew an ominous whisper,
Suspicion and passion blent,
That broke in a sullen murmur
At the door of the General's tent.

And the lips of the under-leaders
Were barbed with the covert jeer,
And they longed for a bold commander
" Who was fettered not by fear."

SKENANDOA

But said Herkimer the hero,
 " We must tarry a little space
For the signal sound of the sortie
 From the guarded Carrying Place."

Then they caviled at his caution,
 And they hinted his valor weak,
And they tossed the taunt of "Tory"
 Till the flush was hot on his cheek.

So he cried to each carping captain,
 " Be the blood upon your head ! "
Then he rose with a ringing "Forward ! "
 And the fatal word was said.

A cheer through the ranks of yeomen
 Out-rang with a buoyant bound,
And the walls of the woodland echoed
 At the burst of the eager sound.

THE TRIAL BY BATTLE

There was hurry of hobbled horses,
And the forming of footmen fast,
And the better counsel of caution
On the wind of chance was cast.

Forsooth, there was little recking
That danger and death might lurk
Upon either side of the pathway
In the thicket's maze and murk !

In their eagerness for action
They rallied as though for a race
Toward the camp of the banded foemen
By the fort of the Carrying Place.

And they fared in this free-heart fashion
Till they came to a narrow swale
That widened away to the lowlands
Beyond the dip of the trail.

SKENANDOA

It was compassed about with quiet ;
Not a frog-croak from the rush,
Not a fife-note flung by the thrasher
From the viny underbrush !

But sudden the silent valley
Gave voice to an awful choir,
And lo ! they were met and menaced
By a blinding arc of fire.

And the foremost rank gave backward,
And melted away like the mist
That hangs o'er the hills when morning
Their crest with its beams has kissed.

For a moment the palsy of panic !
And fate in the balance hung ;
When out of and over the chaos
The voice of their leader rung.

THE TRIAL BY BATTLE

And the men caught heart at his courage,
And they turned as the beast at bay,
With the fury-fire in their bosoms,
And their arms made strong to slay.

Where brooded the spell of silence,
And the sky was clear of a cloud,
Now buzzed the bullets of battle,
And the white smoke stretched its shroud.

Out of the veiled valley,
With its burden of the dead,
And along the slope of the hillside
The wave of the conflict spread.

Death was alurk in the forest ;
Through the bracken swift he stole,
And his hideous painted image
Was hidden behind each bole.

SKENANDOA

Though sore was the General wounded,
Yet still did he sit in sight,
Grim on his grounded saddle
Above the rage of the fight.

And ever an inspiration
Seemed kindled when he spoke,
For the wavering aim grew steady,
And surer the doubtful stroke.

But the battle's fiery ravin
Was drowned by a thunder-roar,
And the wrath of the heavens was loosened
As the struggle backward bore ;

And the staunchest pines of the woodland
That had made the winds their mock,
Were racked and rent and riven
By the awful tempest-shock.

.

THE TRIAL BY BATTLE

On the verge of the ardent vanguard
When the fatal vale was won,
Were marching the dauntless sachem
And the Singing Arrow's son.

And the hawk-eyed Skenandoa,
With his nimble comrade, made
A perilous plunge for the alders
On the edge of the ambuscade.

And there, when the tempest-torrent
Had broken, they still crouched low,
A boon to the baffled yeomen,
A thorn in the side of the foe.

And there, when the rack had scattered,
A debonair band drew nigh
From out of the drench of the thicket,
Like stars from a midnight sky.

SKENANDOA

“ Our friends ! ” cried the weary yeomen,
And joy from each face shone out :
Then broke the truth — “ *They are Tories !* ”
And rage leaped loose at the shout.

For the patriot sons of the Mohawk,
With a noble wrath imbued,
Were burning to wreak their vengeance
On the heads of the traitor brood, —

The men who had caused the carnage
That flowed in a cruel flood,
Who had severed the ties of friendship,
Who had broken the bonds of blood.

And lo ! ere a Tory rifle
Had vented its venom'd ire
Their ranks were raked and riddled
By a sweeping scourge of fire.

THE TRIAL BY BATTLE

And into the midst of the mêlée
That followed the volleying
Did the son of the Singing Arrow
And the fearless Hemlock spring.

Three were the men that met them,
A-pale with their passion pent,
Three were the men that met them, —
And one from the combat went !

And he, ere the press had parted,
Butler, the Snake in the Grass,
Had smitten at Skenandoa
And shivered his arm like glass.

And ill had it fared with the sachem
In that furious attack
Had the son of the Singing Arrow
Not beaten the foeman back.

SKENANDOA

Such, in sooth, was the sowing
By the fearsome hand of Fate
That bore in the time thereafter
So fruitful a flower of hate !

For still in the heart of the Hemlock
Was a plot of stubborn soil
That had yielded not to the tillage, —
To the saintly Kirkland's toil.

A friend was he fast and fervent,
An awful but open foe,
The birth of hate in whose bosom
Was a heritage of woe.

And though the line of his living
Was that of the noble deed,
There was no forgiveness-blossom
In the garden of his creed.

THE TRIAL BY BATTLE

Now a moment upon his features
As under the shock he shook,
Did the son of the Singing Arrow
See the shade of a deadly look.

But it passed like a sudden wafture
At the hour of the twilight-gleam,
Like the shadow of the eagle
On the glassy breast of the stream.

For there rose from out of the forest,
Through the mist and the fervid heat,
The wail of the baffled warriors,
The cry of the foe's retreat.

And so, in that lonely valley,
In the summer storm and sun,
Was another hero proven,
And another victory won.

SKENANDOA

And ere on the wilding woodbine
Was the flush of the autumn's fire
Did the son of the Singing Arrow
Wed the Rose upon the Briar.

THE FEAST OF THE WHITE DOG





THE FEAST OF THE WHITE DOG

THE pallid chill pall of the winter
Lay over the world.

Like the furry, soft ears of the fox
Were the oak leaves up-curved,

Hanging still to the bough that the wind
Made a toss-about toy
In the wild middle watches of night
When the moon hid its joy.

'T was the time of the jubilee feast,
And to banish each wraith
From wigwam to wigwam had wandered
The Keepers of Faith,

SKENANDOA

Arrayed in dry corn-wreaths that rustled
On ankles and arms
Over robes of the beaver and bear,
And memorial charms.

And the song of devotion and duty
To all had been sung,
And the sacred white dog had been slain
And on high had been hung.

Of the blood of defilement in slaying
No drop had been shed,
As above them he swung for a token
Divine, although dead.

And hot on each hearth had the ashes
Been sprinkled, with prayer
That the Holder of earth and of heaven
Might bless them and spare.

THE FEAST OF THE WHITE DOG

Through devious mazes the dancers,
Erect or a-low,
Had threaded, and snow-snakes had darted
Swift over the snow,

Far flung by the striplings who followed
With scramble and screams ;
And the dreamers had gone to the wisest
For guessing of dreams.

Now the fifth day had dawned, and the sachems
Had builded the pyre
Where the sacred white dog should be laid
For the rites of the fire.

But first to the house of the council
The body was brought
Where the people were solemnly summoned
To view what was wrought.

SKENANDOA

Then gravely spake one of the Keepers
Of Faith to the throng ;
And they answered his long exhortation
With shouting and song.

So with music they moved to the altar,
Slow-pacing, and one
Cried aloud to the Spirit of spirits,
His face toward the sun :

“ Supernal, Almighty, Immortal,
Our refuge and trust,
On the flame goeth back to thy keeping
The symbol of dust, —

“ The ash by Thee lit into living,
And filled with thy breath ;
It riseth ; so we, O Undying,
Would soar above death ! ”

THE FEAST OF THE WHITE DOG

Then the offering, sovereign and sacred,
Was placed on the pyre,
While rang with a worshipful rapture
The voices in choir :

*Ha-wen-ne-yu ! Ha-wen-ne-yu !
Hail, O High One, hail, and hearken !
Though your children may not see you,
Yet with ardor they adore you ;
View them gathered now before you ;
They beseech and they implore you
That their days you will not darken !*

*Ha-wen-ne-yu ! Ha-wen-ne-yu !
Deign, O Great One, deign to listen
To the praises that we bring you
In the blended songs we sing you ;
Lo ! the sacrifice we fling you
On the flames that leap and glisten !*

SKENANDOA

*Ha-wen-ne-yu ! we would bless you
For the fountains and their forces,
For the rhythmic water-courses,
And the greening things and growing,
And the reaping and the sowing ! —
For each season's sweet unsealing
Spilt upon the winds of healing
From the springtime to the snowing !*

*Ha-wen-ne-yu ! Ha-wen-ne-yu !
Out of your aerial spaces
For a moment turn, and take us
To the bosom of your graces !
Bend above us ! Move, and make us
With the marvel of your breath,
As you have in form and feature
Radiant o'er every creature,
Thus the over-chiefs of death !*

THE FEAST OF THE WHITE DOG

As closed the loud chant of the chorus,
Alert and elate
Out-cried to the circle of sachems
The guard at the gate.

And forth from the lessening distance,
As borne upon wings,
They saw leaping toward them the son of
The Arrow that Sings.

They parted, beholding his features
Belovèd so well,
And lo ! at the feet of the Hemlock
He faltered and fell.

There was death on his brow, and his vision
Seemed swooning on night,
And he gasped, " I alone of my comrades
Escaped from the fight.

SKENANDOA

“ We had waited and watched as you bade
 The invaders to mark,
But they swept on us sudden and swift
 At the brink of the dark.

“ They will come ere the sun to the pine trees
 In paling shall pass,
Our foemen, with Brant and with Butler,
 The Snake in the Grass.

“ They smote, but I sprang like the deer
 That is wounded and torn,
To warn her, my Rose on the Briar,
 My people to warn.

“ At the gate of the Long House is safety
 Afar from the foe ;
While yet there is time, O my people,
 I pray ye to go,

THE FEAST OF THE WHITE DOG

“For the frenzy and ire of their onset
May not be withstood,
And their numbers are more as they march
Than the wolves of the wood.”

A sigh, and his strenuous spirit
Had slipped, and was sped ;
And there rose a wild wail from the women
Beholding the dead.

And a form that sprang forth from among them
Sank low at his side,
And clasped him. Then, “Vengeance, my
father !”
She suddenly cried.

And he, towering mighty above them,
Raised solemn and slow
The arm that in battle aforetime
Had bent to the blow, —

SKENANDOA

With the same awful shade on his face
That the dead man had seen
In the stress of the swale at Orisca
To darken his mien, —

Broke silence with words that were heavy
With grief's weary weight ;
Then sudden out-flamed on his hearers
The fire of his hate.

The teachings of Christ were engulfed
In the might of his wrath ;
Toward the goal of his vengeance henceforward
Was pointed his path.

Then swiftly the sachems took counsel
For flight, and in haste
On the breast of the warm earth, his mother,
The dead man was placed.

THE FEAST OF THE WHITE DOG

But brief were the sentences spoken,
The wailings of dole,
After gifts had been heaped by his side
For the journeying soul.

And when swept the fierce foe on the castle
With death-cry and dash,
They found but the altar-smoke curling
O'er ember and ash.



THE REVENGE





THE REVENGE

IN the gate of the Long House the winter
Had wearily wasted away,
And the cheek of the Rose on the Briar
Waxed thin with the lengthening day ;

And her eyes, though unteared by her sorrow,
Burned bright with a yearning unrest
That grew as the sun in the springtime
Went goldenly into the west.

She would watch at the marge of the waters
How the willow buds coyly uncurled,
And smile in sweet sadness when, cloudless,
The blue over-bended the world.

SKENANDOA

The robin's melodious rapture
Was a solace of peace to her pain,
But dearer to her was the guerdon
That lurked in the fall of the rain.

Through the tumult and toss of the tempest
She would mark the mists gather and part,
And brood on the grief of the heavens
As matching the mood of her heart.

And ere ever the blooms of the Maytime
Brought store to the gathering swarm,
Her soul, in the deepening twilight,
Went up on the wings of the storm.

Then into the rain-driven shadows
Fled forth Skenandoa, the chief,
Afar through the wastes of the woodland,
Alone with his God and his grief.

THE REVENGE

And many the sunrise and sunset,
And many the moon's wax and wane,
Ere the lodge at the gate of the Long House
Beheld the old warrior again.

Whenever the treacherous Butler
Out-marshalled his wolves from their lair,
And hurried them on to the hunting,
The unsleeping Hemlock was there.

Sometimes in the hush of the midnight
' His warning, a benison, came ;
Sometimes in the pause of the noontide
He saved from the torture and flame.

Now west to the Thunder of Waters
He wended by swamp and by swale ;
Now north to the River of Islands
He tirelessly followed the trail.

SKENANDOA

Now south on the wide Susquehanna
The dip of his paddle was heard ;
But fate still the fell blow averted,
And still was the vengeance deferred.

Then Winter again sowed its silence
And snows on the length of the land,
Till the Springtime came over the hilltop
With the boon of release in her hand.

And with laughter the Summer tripped after,
Fulfilling the gleaner's desire,
But bearing no harvest of slaughter
To soften the Indian's ire.

And now to a humor like madness
The mood of his passion had grown,
And the orient amber of Autumn
Still saw him a wanderer lone.

THE REVENGE

One morn, ere the death of October,
There came to his shelter a word,
And joy mounted upward within him
As mounteth the sun-winged bird.

His eyes that hung heavy and haggard,
Beholding his quest naught avail,
Now burned with an ominous presage
At thought of the end of the trail.

For Butler was routed in battle,
And lagged on his line of retreat,
While, raging, the country-side rallied
To follow on pitiless feet.

So silent and secret the sachem,
Though baffled by sleet and by snow,
Unflaggingly guided the vanguard
That pressed on the flank of the foe.

SKENANDOA

Day-long through the thorn of the thicket
They fared with unfaltering tread,
Till night lit her beacons of bivouac, —
Her frosty white stars overhead.

Again at the rose-flush of daybreak,
With the west wind attuning its flute,
They girded themselves for the conflict,
And took up the path of pursuit.

At last in the floodtide of mid-day,
Where widened the sweep of a dell,
By the stream of the Slanting of Waters
They full on the fugitives fell.

Here, losing his cunning and caution,
The sinister Snake in the Grass
Stepped forth from his shelter of shadow,
Commanding his men to amass.

THE REVENGE

Then vengeance out-pealed from a rifle,
And triumph up-soared from a cry,
For prone by the base of a beech bole
Did the scourge of the patriots lie.

While scattered the Tories in terror
As scatter the shapes of a dream,
Out-burst from his covert the sachem
And breasted the stress of the stream.

Then echoed the ominous death-whoop
From crest to wood-canopied crest,
Proclaiming the valiant Oneida
Had won to the end of his quest.

And lo ! in a breath from his spirit
The frenzy was faded and gone,
As visions from one in a fever
At touch of the quieting dawn.

SKENANDOA

There came to the sting of his sorrows
A sudden and soothing surcease,
And back to the paths of his people
He wended, attended by peace.

Here arbiter Time gave him honor
Above that assigned to his peers,
Sustaining his vigor, and adding
A century's crown to his years.

And Kirkland, aforetime his teacher,
Again brought his vision to see
The wonderful ways of the Master
Who labored in far Galilee.

And though with the wasting of seasons
There came to his eyes an eclipse,
Still clear as the wells of the spirit
The wisdom that fell from his lips.

THE REVENGE

So toward life's mysterious night-time
In faith did he wander, as one
Who marks the slow-gathering darkness
Yet fears not the set of the sun.



EPILOGUE





EPILOGUE

WITH leafy arch and with tall pilaster
Look Kirkland hills to the morning skies ;
Here, side by side with his earthly master,
Skenandoa, the chieftain, lies.

Thus would he rest by the one who taught him,
In trust that his presence would save and shield,
And so his obedient brethren brought him
To the hill that smiles on the fair White Field.

Around him a snow of the violet petals
The young spring sows with a fragrance free,
And through the valley the River of Nettles
Sings on its winding way to the sea.

SKENANDOA

A wave of greenery breaks and billows,
Afar to the Deerfield ridges rolled,
And the tremulous sheen of the graceful willows
Wavers from silver to orange-gold.

But the hardy hand at the plough and harrow
Has changed the face of the verdant vale
Since he and the son of the Singing Arrow
Sped so swift on the midnight trail.

For now, where hunted a wandering people,
And the lonely pine was the only spire,
The clustered chimneys and dotted steeple
Answer the dawn with a flush of fire.

No more are the fertile meadows fallow,
But yield to the reaper the willing wheat,
And Learning, bearing the bays that hallow,
Has made the slope of the hills her seat.

EPILOGUE

But the sachem's name on the lip shall linger,
And to his grave, as the swift years wend,
Fame still shall point with a faithful finger,
And a "Lo! here lieth 'the white man's friend!'"



NOTES



NOTES

I

Page 13. *From the corn-encompassed castle.*

The term "castle" was frequently applied to stockaded Indian villages; as, Oneida Castle, Seneca Castle, etc.

Page 14. *Braves of both the Wolf and Bear.*

Though some of the tribes forming the Iroquois Confederacy were subdivided into as many as eight parts, each part designated by the name of an animal or a bird, the Oneidas had but three subdivisions; namely, the Wolf, the Bear, and the Turtle.

Page 16. *Through the doorway of the Long House.*

The Long House was the name given by the Iroquois to that portion of the present State of New

SKENANDOA

York occupied by the confederacy. "The Long House opened its eastern door upon the Hudson, while the western looked out upon Niagara." (*Morgan.*)

Page 16. *Beleaguered Stanwix.*

Fort Stanwix, later styled Fort Schuyler, a fortification which stood upon the site of the present city of Rome, New York.

Page 16. *Tba-en-da-né-gea* (Bundle-of-Sticks).

Joseph Brant, the famous Mohawk chief. In the expedition sent against Fort Stanwix and the Mohawk valley in the summer of 1777, Colonel St. Leger commanded the British and Tories, and Brant the Indian allies.

Page 17. *Where the wigwams of Orisca.*

Orisca, an Indian village which was situated not far from the site of the present town of Oriskany.

Page 17. *Hearken to the Hemlock's cry.*

Though the common rendering of the name Skenandoa (a hemlock) is incorrect, the author has

NOTES

thought it permissible to retain this current significance, inasmuch as in his most famous speech the chief compares himself to this tree. Only a short time before his death the sachem said: "I am an aged hemlock. The winds of an hundred winters have whistled through my branches. I am dead at the top. The generation to which I belong have run away and left me. Why I live the Great Spirit only knows. Pray to my Jesus that I may have patience to wait for my appointed time to die."

In regard to the correct spelling of the sachem's name and its real significance, Mr. J. W. B. Hewitt, of the American Bureau of Ethnology at Washington, thus writes: "The name Skenando [Skenandoa] is properly written Oskeñnonto', the initial 'o' being very short, and the final apostrophe representing a sudden closure of the throat. The name signifies, literally, ghost- or death- faced, referring to the sad or pitiful expression of the eyes and face of the deer, supposed to have been occasioned by the constant fear of being hunted by man and beasts of prey."

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Page 18. *For has not our master, Kirkland,
Man of meekness, blessed the fight.*

Samuel Kirkland (1741-1808), missionary to the Oneida Indians, and founder of Hamilton Oneida Academy and Hamilton College. It was Kirkland who converted Skenandoa to Christianity, and it was almost entirely through Kirkland's instrumentality that the Oneidas aided the patriots in the Revolutionary War, while most of the other tribes of the six nations actively assisted the British.

Page 18. *By the rites of my adoption.*

"It has been stated, but upon what authority the author does not know, that Skenandoa was not an Oneida by birth, but was a native of a tribe living a long distance to the northwest, and was adopted by the Oneidas when a young man. He may have belonged to the Necariaguas, who lived north of Mackinaw, but a considerable body of whom came in 1722, and were adopted by the six nations and soon became intermingled with them." (*Jones.*)

NOTES

II

Page 26. *The fourfold light of The Loon.*

On night excursions during the spring and summer, when the moon was not visible, the Indians were guided by a group of four stars (at the angle of a rhombus) which they called *The Loon*.

Page 26. *Place of the Fox.*

Indian name for the site of the present village of Vernon, New York.

Page 27. *White Field.*

Indian name for the site of the present village of Clinton, New York.

Page 27. *River of Nettles.*

Indian name for the Oriskany Creek.

SKENANDOA

III

The Trial by Battle.

“ Yet if one will but think, it is as clear as daylight that Oriskany was the turning-point of the war. The Palatines, who had been originally colonized on the upper Mohawk by the English to serve as a shield against savagery for their own Atlantic settlements, reared a barrier of their own flesh and bones, there at Oriskany, over which St. Leger and Johnson strove in vain to pass. That failure settled everything. The essential feature of Burgoyne's plan had been that this force, which we so roughly stopped and turned back in the forest defile, should victoriously sweep down our valley, raising the Tory gentry as they progressed, and join him at Albany. If that had been done he would have held the whole Hudson, separating the rest of the colonies from New England, and having it in his power to punish and subdue, first the Yankees, then the others at his leisure.

NOTES

“Oriskany prevented this. . . . Burgoyne’s expected allies never reached him ; he was compelled, in consequence, to surrender — and from that day there was no doubt who would in the long run triumph.” (*Harold Frederic, in ‘ In the Valley.’*)

Page 34. *Herkimer the hero.*

General Nicholas Herkimer, who commanded the patriot forces in the battle of Oriskany, and who died ten days afterward from the effect of an unskillful amputation one of his legs having been shattered by a musket-ball, just below the knee, early in the engagement.

Page 36. *The guarded Carrying Place.*

Fort Stanwix. The spot was called “the Carrying Place” by the Indians because it was the point of portage from the Mohawk River to Wood Creek, one of the tributaries of Oneida Lake, for travellers journeying to Oswego and Montreal.

SKENANDOA

Page 41. *Butler, the Snake in the Grass.*

Walter Butler, son of the Tory Colonel, John Butler. It was Walter Butler who, in conjunction with Brant, led the bloody expedition against Cherry Valley in November, 1778.

IV

The Feast of the White Dog.

“ Among the ceremonies incident to the worship of the Iroquois, the most novel were those that ushered in the new year. In midwinter, usually about the first of February, this religious celebration was held. It continued for seven successive days, revealing in its various ceremonials nearly every feature of their religious system. The prominent act which characterized this jubilee, and which, perhaps, indicated what they understood by ‘the most excellent faith,’ was the burning of the white dog on the fifth day of the festival.” (*Morgan.*)

NOTES

Page 51. *And snow-snakes had darted
 Swift over the snow.*

“Among the amusements of the winter season, in Indian life, was the game with snow-snakes. The snakes were made of hickory, and with the most perfect precision and finish. They were from five to seven feet in length, and about one quarter of an inch in thickness, gradually diminishing from about an inch in width at the head to about half an inch at the foot. The head was round, turned up slightly, and pointed with lead to increase the momentum of the snake. The snake was thrown with the hand by placing the forefinger against its foot, and supporting it with the thumb and remaining fingers. It was thus made to run upon the snow-crust with the speed of an arrow, and to a much greater distance, sometimes running sixty or eighty rods.” (*Morgan.*)

Page 51. *Ha-wen-ne-yu.*

Iroquois name for the Great Spirit.

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V

Page 63. *Thunder of Waters.* Niagara.

Page 63. *River of Islands.* St. Lawrence.

Page 65. *For Butler was routed in battle.*

This engagement took place near the village of Johnstown, New York, in October, 1781.

Page 66. *By the stream of the Slanting of Waters.*

The West Canada Creek.

VI

Page 73. *Look Kirkland bills to the morning skies.*

One of the townships of Oneida County, New York, bears the name of the missionary.

NOTES

Page 73. *Here, side by side with his earthly master,
Skenandoa, the chieftain, lies.*

Skenandoa died at the age of one hundred and ten (1706-1816), and is buried near Samuel Kirkland in the Hamilton College burial-ground at Clinton, New York. His body, in accordance with his expressed wish, was originally laid by the side of Kirkland's in a little plot in the rear of the house in Clinton occupied by the missionary. When Kirkland's remains were removed to the college cemetery, those of Skenandoa were also transferred thither.

Page 74. *Afar to the Deerfield ridges rolled.*

Deerfield is the name of an Oneida County township lying northeast of the city of Utica and the Mohawk River.

OF THIS EDITION OF SKEN-
ANDOA THREE HUNDRED COP-
IES HAVE BEEN PRINTED BY
JOHN WILSON & SON UNI-
VERSITY PRESS CAMBRIDGE
MARCH 1896. .











